

REMARKS

In the April 13, 2010 Office Action, claims 1-5, 7 and 14 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 6 and 8-13 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the April 13, 2010 Office Action, Applicants have cancelled claims 2, 6 and 14 and amended claims 1, 3 and 8 as indicated above. Also, Applicants have added new claim 15. Thus, claims 1, 3-5, 7-13 and 15 are pending, with claims 1 and 8 being the only independent claims.

Applicants have amended the claims to accept the indicated allowable subject matter. Specifically, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 6 (and thus claim 2), and amended claim 8 to place this claim in independent form. In any case, reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 7 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,205,797 (Maeda). In response, Applicants have cancelled claims 2 and 14 and amended independent claim 1 to add the limitations of indicated allowable claim 6 (and thus claim 2, from which previously presented claim 6 depended) into independent claim 1. Thus, this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, Applicants believe that independent claim 1 and its dependent claim 7 are now allowable over the prior art of record.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 3-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Maeda patent. In response, Applicants have amended claims 3-5 to depend from claim 1. Claim 1 is believed to be allowable as explained above. Thus, this rejection is now believed to be moot. According Applicants believe that claims 3-5 are now allowable over the prior art of record.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 6 and 8-13 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 6 (and thus claim 2), and amended claim 8 to place this claim in independent form. Thus, independent claims 1 and 8 and dependent claims 3-5, 7 and 9-13 are believed to be allowable.

Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

New Claims

Applicants have added new claim 15 by the current Amendment. Claim 15 depends from independent claim 8, and thus, is believed to be allowable because claim 8 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Appl. No. 10/593,474
Amendment dated July 2, 2010
Reply to Office Action of April 13, 2010

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1, 3-5, 7-13 and 15 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 2, 2010

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